

**Kanegasaki Sister City Committee**  
**Business Meeting Minutes**  
**October 20, 2010**  
**4:00 PM Senior Center Alice Dowd Lounge**

**Members Present:** Amy Springer (Chair), Nancy Bess, Denise Boyd, Florence Boyton, Jule Dupre, Byron Koh, Aaron Kropf, Kathy Woods Masalski, Nancy Pagano, Yuko Takahashi

**Others:** Aaron Hayden (Select Board Liaison)

**Members Absent:** Bill Hutchinson, Helen MacMellon, Stephanie Joyce

**Minutes of October 6, 2010:** Accepted as read.

**Treasurer's Report:** \$1519.13

**Amy's Comments**

1. The fourth member of the Mayor's party will be Ms. Yukiko Oikawa, a representative of the women's organization for business owners and also the head of the women's business of commerce in Kanegasaki.
2. We were asked to provide a letter from the Select Board congratulating Kanegasaki on their 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a town and 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the citizen charter. The celebration was October 14, so a note was drafted on town letterhead, signed by Select Board Chair Stephanie O Keefe and translated by Yuko, and sent by email to arrive in time.
3. A copy of the invitation letter to the Mayor to come speak at Town meeting, also signed by Select Board Chair Stephanie O Keefe, was passed around at the meeting,
4. Discussion of meeting with School Superintendent Maria Geryk

A meeting from some committee members with Maria Geryk is scheduled for Nov.2. This is primarily to acquaint Geryk with the Mayor's concerns about the exchange of students. Amy stated that we need to make a case for why we believe that the opportunity to send children from Amherst to Kanegasaki is an important one to take advantage of. That it provide a chance for students to learn about the world outside of where they live, and Japan has the advantages of being a culture that is at once very steeped in tradition and history but also highly developed and immersed in the modern era. Because of our special relationship with Kanegasaki, we can offer students a chance to spend a home stay in a small town in Japan, one similar in size to Amherst and somewhat rural like Amherst, which is a very different experience than just sending them to visit a popular city.

We should also make a case for why we are focusing on middle school students, one reason is because Kanegasaki has a middle school but not a high school in their town (there is a regional high school for their students), so it is easier for them to coordinate logistics in the middle school, and these are the students they send to Amherst. In addition this is a good experience to provide for middle school children, they are at an impressionable age where the opportunity to interact with another culture can have a huge impact, right at a time when they are beginning to form their own opinions and perceptions of society and culture. There are not that many opportunities for middle school students to go abroad, but here we have one that is particularly for their age, and for which the logistics and home stays will be enthusiastically arranged by our Sister City.

It was pointed out that most likely Geryk wouldn't need to be convinced why the exchange was a good thing, but Amy thought it is nonetheless important for us to articulate our position. Some discussion ensued about the plusses and minuses of working within the school district, and the possibility of organizing student trips by the committee was considered, but for the present, the plan is to let the school superintendent know what she might expect to hear from the mayor and why we would like to see an exchange of students from Amherst to Kanegasaki resume.

5. Schedule was passed around and tentative assignments for what committee members wanted to participate in which events was determined (for committee members present or who had contacted the chair by email). An updated schedule will be sent out by email.

Volunteers to take responsibility for each meal were taken; reimbursement for these meals will be worked out after the visit among the committee members.

6. Amy will work on a press release about the Mayor's visit to send out soon.

**Detailed Planning Discussions of the Mayor's visit followed.**

Monday, Nov.8

- Discussed translators with Yuko, vans, the possibilities for activities for the female, business delegate in the Mayor's delegation (perhaps Cinder Jones could be invited to meet with her)
- Kathy will arrange for lunch at the 1:30 pm at the Faculty Club at U. Mass.
- Switched the visits to U. Mass and Amherst College
- Discussed the logistics at the Town Hall Meeting
- Supper will be at the Allen House (Denise will call), then Town Hall, then the Pub

Tuesday, Nov. 9

- Discussed logistics of school visit, lunch (at Fresh Side), luggage, visit to E. Dickinson's (Amy will arrange to advance the time a half an hour), departure (from Town Hall at 1:00 pm – members should attend, if possible).

**Reception**

- So far, 39 will attend; \$200+ dollars raised.
- Very detailed discussion of the ramifications of the town's policy of not using funds for drinks followed.

**Gifts**

- Aaron K. showed two wall hangings made by a local artist. The Committee approved their purchase.
- Aaron will have 100 boxes of note cards prepared for use as Committee gifts to the delegation and for fund raising.

**Meeting Adjourned at 5:52 PM.**

**Next Meeting of Full Committee: December 15, 2010 at the Bangs Center**

**Respectfully submitted by Byron Koh, Secretary**